

FAQ ON THE GENERAL CONVENTION

In 2009, the 76th General Convention of the Episcopal Church will meet in Anaheim, California from Wednesday, 8 July through Friday, 17 July.

Q: What is General Convention?

A: General Convention is the Episcopal Church's triennial gathering of bishops and elected clergy and lay deputies. Its bicameral makeup is the House of Bishops and the House of Deputies in which lay and ordained deputies are equally represented. It is a combination of legislative assembly, bazaar of goods and services and family reunion.

Q: What is a deputy?

A: Deputies are elected by the Diocesan Council. Deputies are not delegates; that is, they are not elected to represent the electing dioceses. Deputies vote their conscience for the good of the church. They cannot be instructed to vote one way or another, for to do so would preclude godly debate and preempt the work of the Holy Spirit.

Deputies are expected to serve on committees, if appointed, to attend forums and hearings, to read the reports to the church from its commissions, committees, agencies and boards, to listen to, and if so moved, to respond to resolutions on the floor of the house.

Deputies were elected at Diocesan Convention (four clergy/four lay; four alternate clergy/four alternate lay). The House of Deputies is chaired by the President of the House, Bonnie Anderson.

Q: Who are the deputies from the Diocese of Chicago?

A: Deputies from the Diocese of Chicago are:

CLERGY DEPUTIES

Canon Scott Hayashi St. Andrew's, Downers Grove

The Rev. Bonnie Perry All Saints, Chicago

The Rev. Ruth Meyers St. Augustine, Wilmette

The Rev. Jacqueline Cameron Church of the Atonement, Chicago

LAY DEPUTIES

Vicki Garvey, deputation chair Grace, Oak Park

Patricia Abrams St. Thomas, Chicago

Ian Hallas St. Giles, Northbrook

Newland Smith St. David's, Glenview

CLERGY ALTERNATES

The Rev. Matt Gunter St. Barnabas, Glen Ellyn

The Rev. Richard Tolliver St. Edmund, Chicago

The Rev. William Nesbit Jr. St. Charles, Saint Charles

The Rev. Shawn Schreiner Grace, Oak Park

LAY ALTERNATES

Anne Tuohy St. Elisabeth, Glencoe

Sandra McPhee St. Matthew's, Evanston

Susan Czolgosz St. Mary's, Park Ridge

Richard Peete St. Mary's, Crystal Lake

Q: Are all bishops members of the House of Bishops?

A: All bishops of the Episcopal Church, active and retired, are entitled to seat, voice and vote in the House of Bishops. The House of Bishops is chaired by the Primate of the Episcopal Church, Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori. Bishops attending from the Diocese of Chicago include: **Jeffrey Lee, Bishop of Chicago**; and **Victor Scantlebury, Assistant Bishop of Chicago**.

Q: How are resolutions considered?

A: Resolutions proposed for discussion at convention are referred to legislative committees, which consider, amalgamate and perfect them before presenting them on the floor of convention (either to the House of Deputies or the House of Bishops, Legislative committees hold hearings on legislation at which the following can speak: deputy, registered alternate or registered visitor. These are held in convention hotels near the Convention Center.

The House of Bishops and House of Deputies meet, deliberate and vote separately. To be enacted resolutions must pass both houses in the same language. Both houses have the right to amend legislation, but the amendment must be accepted by the other house. Resolutions presented to convention come from four sources: committees, commissions, agencies and boards of the church; bishops; dioceses and provinces; and deputies.

Debate on the floor is governed by the Constitution and Canons of the church, Rules of Order for each house, Joint Rules of Order (that apply to both houses) and Roberts' Rules of Order. Deputies are expected to listen respectfully to the views of others and to adhere to the rules, which require, for example, that persons of different points of view alternate at microphones. In the House of Deputies three lay or clerical deputations may request a vote by orders. In a vote by orders each diocesan deputation has two votes: one lay vote and one clerical vote. To cast that vote the deputation is polled. If a majority of a deputation is in favor, the diocesan lay or clerical vote is cast as a "yes." If a majority of a deputation is opposed, the vote is cast as a "no." Tied deputations count as "divided" and, in effect, as additional "no" votes.

Q: How are the committees made up and what is their function?

A: Much of the work of convention is carried out by legislative committees. The Presiding Bishop and the President of the House of Deputies determine the number of persons who serve on committees and their membership. Deputies are asked to indicate their preference for membership on committees, and the presiding officers make their choice considering previous experience, expertise and interest, ensuring the committees represent diverse points of view, geographic, ethnic and gender diversity and participation by younger deputies. First time deputies generally are not given committee assignments in order not to overwhelm them with responsibilities during their first General Convention.

Diocesan members assigned to committees include:

- Jeffrey Lee — Prayer Book, Liturgy, Music
- Victor Scantlebury — Church in Small Communities; Privilege and Courtesy (chair)
- Scott Hayashi — Evangelism
- Ruth Meyers — Prayer Book, Liturgy, Music
- Bonnie Perry — Ministry
- Jacqueline Cameron — none
- Pat Abrams — Stewardship and Development (chair)
- Vicki Garvey — Education
- Ian Hallas — none
- Newland Smith — Social and Urban Affairs

Q: Is there worship at General Convention?

A: General Convention meets prayerfully. Each day bishops, deputies, registered alternates and delegates to the ECW Triennial gather for Bible study and Holy Eucharist. Both the House of Deputies and the House of Bishops have chaplains, who lead their houses in regular prayer at the beginning and end of sessions and daily at noon. Chaplains are also asked to pray before the enactment of important legislation. Organizations within the church sponsor additional worship services, while volunteers staff a prayer room in which there is continual intercession for the work of convention. **Dent Davidson**, our diocesan missionary for liturgy and the arts, will be assisting as musician for the House of Bishops.

At one special festival Eucharist at the United Thank Offering is presented. (The United Thank Offering is taken up in parishes twice each year for the mission of the church.)

Q: What additional events take place during General Convention?

A: The national **Episcopal Church Women's** organization meets concurrently with General Convention as do the **Daughters of the King**. There is also a **Young Adult Festival** July 9-14, the **Youth Program** July 9-12 (our diocese is sending 14 youth to the Convention), and a **children and toddler program** July 6-17.

One of the most interesting parts of convention is the Exhibit Hall, a marketplace of goods and ideas in which the organizations and interest groups within the church present their wares, recruit members and do their best to influence legislation.

Many church-related organizations hold meetings in conjunction with convention, and there are lunches and dinners hosted by seminaries, provinces, societies, boards and staff offices of the church.